

January 3, 2008

Duane Betournay, Director
Division of Child and Family Services
120 N. 200 W.
Salt Lake City, Utah 84123

Dear Duane,

As you know, I am the co-chair of the State Quality Improvement Committee. The Committee has spent the last several months reviewing data and other information related to substance abuse and had presentations from Jack Green regarding the workload study and from Angela Robbins regarding the programs the Division provides as in-home services.

The Committee has developed the following recommendations. We would appreciate your consideration of them and advise us as to whether or not they are accepted and will be implemented.

In-Home Services:

It is recommended that the Division write separate practice guidelines related to kinship cases/care. This and other recommendations regarding kinship care grow out of concerns for the lack of a support system for kinship caregivers. They take on a challenge similar to that of licensed foster parents, and in some ways more challenging, but do not have the training and ongoing support foster parents are provided.

It is recommended that a system be devised to follow the recommendations of the workload study so that staff are not overloaded.

It is recommended that the Division develop a system to distinguish PSS cases where the children are living with their parents from those receiving PSS services as a result of being placed with kin.

It is recommended that the children in a kin placement be counted as individuals rather than as a family count.

It is recommended that consideration be given to increasing the amount of client contact required for kinship cases.

It is recommended that consideration be given to increasing the amount of client contact required for PSS cases. The basic premise for this recommendation is that a once-per-month visit may be sufficient for children in the care of trained and licensed foster parents, but it is inadequate for children remaining in a home which is in crisis.

Substance Abuse:

It is recommended that a subcommittee of the QI committee be supported to develop multi-disciplinary training across the state. The subjects proposed for the training/discussion are as follows:

- How to develop consistent statewide practice in regard to cases of newborns alleged to have been exposed to substance abuse.
- Emphasizing the importance of accurate data entry in cases where substance abuse is a contributing factor to abuse/neglect.
- Information will be provided regarding the laws and time parameters under which families must show substantial progress in order to have their children returned to their custody/care.
- We also intend to get feedback from the attendees about what needs they have in regard to resources and training in their area.

The subcommittee would like to have the CPS program manager as well as a member of the professional development team as members.

If possible, some funding for refreshments or a meal for the multi-disciplinary training teams being made available would be much appreciated.

Recognizing that these recommendations are presented to you without the benefit of the information and discussions which form their basis, I think it might be helpful if I and/or members of the Committee had the opportunity to discuss them further with you or those you may assign to consider them. We would welcome such opportunities.

As always, thank you for the consistent support the Committee receives from the Division and from you personally.

Sincerely,

Rick Smith
State Quality Improvement Committee